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Message Text

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41
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
---------- 061172
O R 041445Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE NIACT IMMEDIATE 9719
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T JIDDA 0042

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SA
SUBJECT: SAUDI CONCERN OVER JERUSALEM

REF: AMMAN 7759, DEC 31, 1974 (NOTAL)

1. DHAIKH MOHAMMAD MAS'UD, SAUDI ACTING MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TOLD ME THIS MORNING (0800 GMT JAN 4) THAT HE HAD BEEN REQUESTED BY KING FAISAL TO ASK ME TO CONVEY TO PRESIDENT FORD AND THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT THE GREAT SAUDI CONCERN OVER ACTIONS OF ISRAEL IN JERUSALEM.

2. HE SAID THE SAUDIS, AS WELL AS ALL OTHER ARABS, WERE DISTRESSED BY THE VIOLENT AMERICAN REACTION AGAINST UNESCO CONDEMNATION OF ISRAEL. THE ARABS THOUGHT THE UNESCO'S ACTION WAS BOTH FAIR AND REASONABLE. WHILE IT MIGHT BE AGREED THAT THE SPECIFIC ACTION FOR WHICH ISRAEL WAS CONDEMNED MIGHT NOT HAVE WARRANTED SUCH A STRONG RESPONSE, IT HAD TO BE VIEWED IN THE CONTEXT OF EVERYTHING ISRAEL HAS DONE AGAINST THE HOLY CITY OF JERUSALEM; ALL ITS EFFORTS TO DESTROY
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THE ARAB CHARACTER OF THE CITY. MAS'UD REFERRED TO THE

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ILLEGAL EXCAVATIONS WHICH HAD THREATENED MOSLEM MONUMENTS AND BUILDINGS, TO REPEATED DESECRATIONS OF MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN SHRINES AND CEMETERIES AND, WORST OF ALL THE MASSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS PROJECTS IN THE ARAB LANDS IN AND AROUND JERUSALEM.

3. THE KING WOULD LIKE TO KNOW URGENTLY WHAT IS THE UNITED STATES POSITION ON THE HOLY CITY. THE KING WAS ASKING NOW, SAID MAS'UD, THAT THE UNITED STATES TAKE MEASURES TO HALT ISRAELI DESECRATION OF THE CITY, SPECIFICALLY THAT IT STOP THE ISRAELI CONSTRUCTION WHICH MAKES SETTLEMENT OF THE JERUSALEM ISSUE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT.

4. I TOLD SHAIKH MOHAMMAD THAT OUR POSITION ON THE ISRAELI ACTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED LANDS WAS WELL KNOWN. THE SECRETARY HAD SAID REPEATEDLY THAT NOTHING ISRAEL DID IN THE ARAB LANDS IT OCCUPIED IN 1967 WOULD BE ALLOWED TO JEOPARDIZE THE FINAL PEACE SETTLEMENT. MAS'UD SAID HE KNEW WE HAD SAID THIS; THE KING KNEW IT, TOO. BUT THE UNITED STATES MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THE MORE ISRAEL BUILDS IN JERUSALEM AND ELSEWHERE IN THE OCCUPIED LANDS THE LESS WILLING IT WILL BE TO WITHDRAW FROM THEM. HE REPEATED HIS REQUEST THAT THE UNITED STATES PUT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL TO STOP THE CONSTRUCTION.

5. COMMENT: I DO NOT KNOW IF THIS IS PART OF A COORDINATED ARAB APPROACH TO US. ALTHOUGH IT WAS VERY SIMILAR TO THE JORDANIAN DEMARCHE TO OUR EMBASSY IN AMMAN (REFTEL), I DOUBT THAT THERE WAS ANY JOINT PLANNING. IT IS JUST THAT KING FAISAL HAS VERY STRONG FEELINGS ABOUT JERUSALEM. HE READS ALL THE ACCOUNTS OF ISRAELI ACTIONS IN THE CITY AND HE IS CONVINCED THAT ISRAEL WILL NEVER WITHDRAW FROM THE OLD CITY WITHOUT STRONG U.S. GOVERNMENT PRESSURE. AND UNLESS THERE IS A SETTLEMENT OF THE ISSUE WHICH THE ARABS CAN CONSIDER HONORABLE (NOT NECESSARILY THE STATUS QUO ANTE) FAISAL WILL DO EVERYTHING HE CAN TO ENSURE THAT THERE BE NO RPT NO PEACE.

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